

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O P 181225Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6173

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

S E C R E T CAIRO 11091

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG

SUBJ: NEW ARAB LEAGUE INITIATIVE ON LEBANON

REF: CAIRO 11027

SUMMARY: ARAB LEAGUE SYG RIAD TO ISSUE "VERY IMPORTANT" STATEMENT ON LEBANON AUGUST 18. OUR BEST GUESS IS THAT IT WILL SUPPORT KUWAITI CALL FOR URGENT SUMMIT AND RECOMMEND SUBSTANTIAL STRENGTHENING OF AL PEACE-KEEPING FORCE. ARAB LEAGUE (AND GOE) OFFICIALS ARE CONVINCED THAT USG, TACITLY AT LEAST, IS NOT DISPLEASED WITH EVENTS IN LEBANON AND MAY EVEN FAVOR PARTITION. TO CORRECT THIS IMPRESSION AND TO SUPPORT RIAD CALL FOR NEW AL ACTION, ASST AL SYG RECOMMENDS HIGH LEVEL US STATEMENT REITERATING US POSITION ON TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND HOLDING OUT HOPE TO PALESTINIANS THAT THEY WILL EVENTUALLY HAVE HOME OF THEIR OWN. WE BELIEVE IT MIGHT BE TIMELY TO CONSIDER SUCH A STATEMENT. END SUMMARY

1. ARAB LEAGUE ASST SYG FOR PALESTINE AFFAIRS DR. MUHAMMAD AL-FARRA (A PALESTINIAN) TOLD POLCOUNS MORNING AUGUST 18

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THAT IN RESPONSE TO KUWAITI CALL FOR URGENT ARAB SUMMIT ON

LEBANON AND REPORT JUST RECEIVED IN PERSON FROM ARAB LEAGUE
REP HASAN SABRI AL-KHULI, AL SYG MUHMUD RIAD WOULD ISSUE
"VERY IMPORTANT" STATEMENT LATER TODAY. FARRA HAD NOT YET
SEEN STATEMENT AND WAS RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS CONTENTS.
HOWEVER, IT IS EXPECTED TO REITERATE AL-KHULI'S FRANK STATEMENT TO
CAIRO PRESS PUBLISHED AUGUST 17 (REFTEL) IN WHICH HE
DEPLORED CONTINUING KILLING, HELD OUT LITTLE HOPE FOR
CESSATION OF FIGHTING UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, AND CALLED
FOR ARAB LEAGUE DECISION TO SEND A LARGER ARAB FORCE TO
BRING AN END TO FIGHTING.

2. FARRA SAID RIAD HAD SENT MESSAGE LAST NIGHT (AUGUST 17) TO
ALL AL MEMBERS, FORWARDING KUWAITI CALL FOR SUMMIT. POSITIVE
RESPONSES HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FROM SAUDI ARABIA, SUDAN,
QATAR AND UAE. FARRA EXPECTS EGYPT TO ALSO FAVOR SUMMIT. HE IS
LESS CERTAIN ABOUT SYRIAN REACTION AND IN FACT PROFESSES
TO BE MYSTIFIED OVER SYRIAN OBJECTIVES. HE SAID THAT IF SYRIA'S
OBJECTIVE IS TO ESTABLISH HEGEMONY OVER PALESTINIANS AND
LEBANON, IT HAS CERTAINLY GONE ABOUT IT IN THE WRONG WAY BY
ALINEATING ALMOST EVERYONE.

3. PARRA WAS CRITICAL OF US ROLE IN LEBANON AND CITED
WIDESPREAD OPINION OF "THINKING ARABS" THAT SYRIAN
ACTIONS HAD USG APPROVAL. AS RESULT, HE BELIEVES, US IS
AGAIN LOSING GROUND THROUGHOUT ARAB WORLD AS CONVICTION
GROWS THAT US ATTEMPTING TO "LATIN-AMERICANIZE" ARAB WORLD
TO SERVE ITS OWN INTERESTS AND THOSE OF ISRAEL. WHILE
FARRA ACCEPTS FACT THAT PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESOLVING
LEBANESE CONFLICT RESTS WITH ARAB LEADERS, HE URGED (ON
PERSONAL BASIS) THAT US USE ITS INFLUENCE TO REVERSE CURRENT
ANTI-US TREND AND BRING ABOUT CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES.

4 IN SUPPORT OF ABOVE, FARRA CITED PALESTINIAN STUDENT
DELEGATION WHICH HAD STAGED SIT-IN AT AL HEADQUARTERS AUGUST
16 AND WHICH HE HAD RECEIVED (REFTEL). DELEGATION WAS IN
VERY ANGRY MOOD. THEIR MAJOR POINTS WERE:
A. THERE IS ABSENCE OF ANY RESPONSIBLE ARAB LEADERSHIP,
EITHER IN LEBANON OR ELSEWHERE;
B. ARAB LEAGUE HAS FAILED TO PROVIDE TRUTH ABOUT SITUATION
IN LEBANON AND HAS BEEN COMPLETELY INEFFECTIVE;

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C. ABOVE TWO ELEMENTS HAVE LED TO A VACUUM IN ARAB WORLD
WHICH PROLONGS AGONY OF LEBANESE AND PALESTINIANS; AND
D. FOREIGN POWERS ARE EXPLOITING THIS VACUUM FOR THEIR
OWN ENDS, PRINCIPALLY THE US, WITHOUT ANY REGARD FOR LIVES
OF PALESTINIANS AND LEBANESE.

5. SPEAKING AS PROFESSED FRIEND OF US AND ON PERSONAL BASIS,
FARRA AGAIN URGED THAT US USE ITS INFLUENCE TO END BLOODSHED.

INITIALLY, HE RECOMMENDED ISSUANCE OF A HIGH-LEVEL US STATEMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THAT WOULD INDIRECTLY SUPPORT MAHMUD RIAD'S STATEMENT THIS AFTERNOON. SUCH A US STATEMENT SHOULD CONTAIN FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. US SUPPORT FOR THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF LEBANON AND ABSOLUTE OPPOSITION TO PARTITION.

B. THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE STATEMENT OF USG RECOGNITION THAT THE LEGITIMATE "RIGHTS" OF THE PALESTINIANS MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, AND THAT THE LEBANESE PROBLEM CANNOT BE RESOLVED UNTIL THE PALESTINIANS AND LEBANESE ARE ASSURED THAT THE PALESTINIANS WILL HAVE A HOME OF THEIR OWN.

C. SUPPORT FOR THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE RECONVENING OF THE ME MEACE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EFFECT PARTICIPATION OF ALL PARTIES CONCERNED, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIANS.

D. EXPRESSION OF CONFIDENCE THAT ARAB LEADERSHIP WILL ACT DECISIVELY TO BRING AN IMMEDIATE HALT TO THE BLOODSHED IN LEBANON AND US SUPPORT FOR SUCH ACTION.

6. COMMENT: FARRA'S COMMENTS ACCURATELY REFLECT (A) DESPAIR OF AL AND MOST GOE OFFICIALS OVER UNENDING LEBANESE CONFLICT AND ITS DIRE CONSEQUENCES FOR ARAB WORLD; AND (B) WIDESPREAD CONVICTION AMONG SAME OFFICIALS THAT USG APPROVES OF WHAT IS HAPPENING IN LEBANON (ONLY DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BEING WHETHER USG ACTIVELY SUPPORTING SYRIAN-CHRISTIAN -ISRAELI "CONSPIRACY" OR MERELY GIVING TACIT SUPPORT). IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT AL OFFICIALS ARE GRASPING AT ANY STRAWS THAT MIGHT HELP. NEVERTHELESS, GIVEN CURRENT ARAB (CERTAINLY EGYPTIAN) ADVERSE PERCEPTION OF US ROLE IN LEBANON, WE BELIEVE IT MIGHT BE TIMELY TO CONSIDER ISSUANCE OF HIGH-LEVEL STATEMENT REITERATING US POSITION ON LEBANON, PALESTINIANS AND ME PEACE SETTLEMENT, PARTICULARLY IF RIAD'S

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STATEMENT HOLDS OUT SOME HOPE FOR EFFECTIVE AL ACTION.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTE SETTLEMENT, POLICIES, RESOLUTIONS, TERRITORIAL CLAIMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976CAIRO11091
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760316-1123
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760844/aaaablpb.tel
Line Count: 156
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 CAIRO 11027
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 MAY 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <11 MAY 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW ARAB LEAGUE INITIATIVE ON LEBANON
TAGS: PFOR, EG, LE, AL
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006